"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." ---RIG VEDA

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Message of the East

VOLUME XLII 1953 NUMBER 4

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CHRIST AND THE NEW YEAR

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130 Beechwood St., Cohasset, Massachusetts

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Services: Sun. 11 A.M. and 3:15 P.M.
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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLII 1953 NUMBER 4

HYMN

By St. Patrick, 5th Century

(Composed while going up to Tara to preach the Gospel. Certain enemies, it is said, lay in hiding to attack him, but he saw only a wild deer with a fawn.)
(Condensed from the original.)

I bind myself today to a strong strength . . .
To God's strength to pilot me;
God's power to uphold me;
God's wisdom to guide me;
God's eye to look before me;
God's ear to hear for me;
God's word to speak for me;
God's hand to guard me;
God's path to lie before me;
God's shield to protect me;
God's host to save me . . .

So have I called on all these strengths
To come between me and every fierce and merciless power . . .

Christ with me, Christ before me;
Christ behind me, Christ in me;
Christ in lying down, Christ in sitting;
Christ in rising up.
Christ in the heart of everyone that thinks of me;
Christ in the mouth of everyone that speaks to me;
Christ in every eye that sees me;
Christ in every ear that hears me.
I bind myself today to a strong strength.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. —*New Testament*

Behind all creeds the Spirit that is One.—*Andrew Lang*

I belong to the Great Church which holds the world within its starlit aisles; that claims the great and good of every race and clime; that finds with joy the grain of gold in every creed, and floods with light and love the germs of good in every soul. —*Robert Ingersoll*

To every mother's heart forlorn
In every home the Christ is born.
—*R. W. Gilder*

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace.
—*Isaiah*

Nothing in human life, least of all in religion, is ever right until it is beautiful. —*Harry Emerson Fosdick.*

At the muezzin's call for prayer,
The kneeling faithful thronged the square,
And on Pushkara's lofty height
The dark priest chanted Brahma's might.
Amid a monastery's weeds.
An old Franciscan told his beads,
While in the synagogue there came
A Jew to praise Jehovah's name.
The one great God looked down and smiled
And counted each His loving child,
For Turk and Brahmin, monk and Jew
Had reached Him through the gods they knew.
—*Harry Romaine*

The Holy Family is God in all guises, coming to all men, to all worlds. —*Selected*

CHRIST AND THE NEW YEAR

Two Lectures by Swami Paramananda

CHRIST OF THE EAST

(An address given over Radio Station KHJ, Los Angeles, California.)

Before we begin our sermon this morning on the *Christ of the East,* let us tune our hearts with thoughts and feelings which are worthy of the Christ spirit, worthy of God, worthy of humanity. Let there be no discordant note — nothing that is not in harmony with our great subject — for without this preparation we shall not be able to rise to any real height of exaltation. Coming from the Orient, as I do, I have been nurtured with the thought that it avails nothing for a man to say a beautiful prayer, no matter how lofty may be its sentiment, unless his life and instrument are in accord with it. Christ taught His disciples this same thing when He told them that if on bringing their gifts to the altar, they remembered there that their brother had aught against them, they should first go and make peace with their brother, and then come and offer their gifts. Therefore now, right at the start, let us make inward peace with ourselves and with all men, so that our hearts and minds may be open to receive that Christ spirit.

What is the Christ spirit? What shall I say to you that is different from what you have already heard? The Eastern soul primarily seeks something that is very definite—practical. This may surprise you. You may have had the idea that Oriental thought was vague and mysterious and out of touch with the things of this world. The true idealist of the East may begin with abstract, exalted views, but he always tries to find their living connection with human life and action.

I have before me here a short poem that was written not by a professed Christian, but by Jallalu'd'in Rumi, the Persian mystic and poet.

> "In each human spirit is a Christ concealed,
> To be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed;
> If from any human soul you lift the veil
> You will find a Christ there hidden without fail."

The Christ I am going to present to you is not the dogmatic Christ with a creed which often excludes people, but the universal Christ, the loving, all-blessed spirit of Christ—the Redeemer hidden within every human soul. It is thus that Easterners see Him.

Dr. Minot Savage, who was one of the most eminent of Christians, a man who wanted to bring the living, glowing picture of Christ into the world of Christianity, said something so near to my conception that I am going to read it to you:

Shall we say, then, that there were no Christians before Christ, and that there are no Christians outside of what we call Christendom? Augustine was wiser than that. He refers somewhere to that which has always been in the world from the beginning, and which, in these latter days, we have come to call Christian. So Augustine, the old Church Father and theologian, recognized that what we regarded as important and essential in Christianity was older than what had gone by that name . . . The ideal man is the man who loves, and the man who knows how to apply his love power and impetus in such a way as to help, save, transform, develop and glorify mankind . . . and I think the man who embodies these three things is a Christian, whatever he believes else.

In my experience, as I have travelled through India and Europe, and over the vast area of this great country,

I have found that the true soul of humanity and the true code of Christianity are one and the same — so tremendously the same that both strike the same note and speak the same language of love, a language that is understood by all who have living hearts within them. Therefore this morning what I am going to impress on your minds is not so much the dogmatic differences which exist in the world of religion, as the fundamental unity which abides and is forever unquestionable.

Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God. Not peace-makers in Christendom only, but blessed are all people who are peace-makers. *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.*

Now that is the picture I have learned to love, the picture of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, conceived in the soul of the East and conveyed by His teachings and His life. The mind of the Easterners see Him as a messenger of Light. They clothe Him in robe of gentleness, with bearing majestic by Divine right; they picture Him as the incarnate Spirit of love and divine loveliness—lowly of heart, mighty of spirit, Brother, Friend and Saviour of man!

How wonderful it would be for us to carry a picture like that in our hearts and in our thoughts, so that it might influence us in our daily lives, inspiring our every part—all that we think and all that we try to put into action in connection with our business and our dealings with humanity.

We never find the great spiritual Teachers coming with

aggressive spirit to convert the world. They live gently. Their appeal is lowly and tender. They do not come with the idea of demolishing or destroying anything. On the contrary, they come with a spirit which is full of healing. They do not approach even those people who are ignorant and of a corrupt nature with a fighting spirit; rather they seek to conquer them with their overwhelming greatness, their sweetness and their lack of ostentation. They make people of that type realize how futile, how useless are their hard, aggressive feelings, and how destructive these feelings are, not only to others but to themselves. The message they bring by their very being is so impressive that no man can long resist it.

We may not all agree on this point, because as we look around us we see people who seem to be almost impenetrable, whom we think we cannot reach through love. Christ found such people before Him and around Him. Any one of us who wants to look at the real facts of Christ's life and experience, will see Him surrounded with difficulties so great that if He had yielded to unmanliness and weakness and doubt, he would have failed in His mission, and the experience for Him would have been heartrending. But He was not destined to fail. He came with a message, He came with a faith, with a hope unfaltering, and He could not yield to anything that was of human weakness.

The man who has touched the heart of God has touched the universal heart. God's spirit is cosmic, universal. It is the common heritage of mankind. One becomes a good Christian not by clinging to a special creed, but by living. Living the life is the basis of all religions.

Living the life! This is what the Oriental understands. If I were to go and preach to a group of people, in India,

for instance, or if you should go there and try to preach to the people the exalted ideas and ideals of Christ, in an effort to convert them, the very first thing they would ask and require is, "In what measure have you transformed your own life?" That is, "How much does that light, that wonderful, that beneficent, that healing light of Christ shine through you?" That will be the first question they will ask, and it is right that people should ask that question. How are we ever going to exemplify any ideal unless that ideal radiates through us? If a man should preach love, if he should quote beautiful sayings from Christ and Christlike spirits and he himself be unloving, there would be no import in his message. If there is anything that throws a doubt, that makes people think that what we are trying to give is only an ideal and not possible for a man to put into practice, we are at once defeated in our efforts.

It is this great distance between the ideal and the practical application of the ideal that constitutes one of the great tragedies of modern life. We have put too many of the great ideas and ideals on the shelf—the ideal of love, of overcoming our enemies through love, forgiving those who may act treacherously toward us — ideals which Christ exemplified every day of his existence through His words and actions. We imagine they are not practical, especially not practical for this materialistic age. But the world of living religion cannot accept any theories, no matter how exalted they are unless they can be put into practice.

There are people even today, living not only according to the ideal of St. Francis—who transformed his life and even his countenance by constantly thinking of the Christ —but who dedicate themselves to the ideal of one uni-

versal Christ spirit. A man of this type may be laughed at. It may be said of him, "This man is visionary; he tries to live up to the letter of the things he reads in the Bible." Yet blessed is that man who fastens his heart to the Christ principle. It would be wonderful if all people could be converted to the lofty and beautiful teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the East, the lowly, the prayerful, devoted, yearning Christ who seeks Divine grace above all other things, who shows man that his first and foremost duty is to find God and to live for God and to make God a living Presence in His life.

True spirit of religion does not make a distinction between one group of men and another. Anyone who loves God is of God, no matter what may be his race, his country or his church. Christ again and again gave the injunction that above all other things man should love God, the Father, making Him the first and foremost consideration. Did He not repeatedly admonish those who came seeking for wealth and success and material advantage: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you?* Does this differ from any other great ideal in the world of life, from the fundamental principle of any great religion? Is it different in its essence? If there is any difference, it is only a surface difference. We might call it a fictitious difference.

How can a man look upon God as his Almighty Father, infinite in love, infinite in loveliness, and at the same time, at the next turn, exclude someone from his religion because he thinks that that man does not belong to those who are "saved," is not a child of the same Father? It is not rational, and yet we are supposed to be rational human beings. We understand the technical meaning of infinitude, we understand theoretically what we mean

when we say that God is Almighty, our all-loving Father. But if He is infinite and all-loving, then does not His infinitude and His love include everyone? And is it not our duty whenever we see someone who is striking a discordant note through hatred and unloveliness and unChrist-like qualities, is it not our duty to regard him as a sick brother? What do you do when you find that your younger brother has done something which is ignoble, something out of the impulse of anger or hatred? Do you not instinctively and with great tender feeling seek to surround him with your protection? Why then should not this be true in the world of religion, in the cosmic universe?

Suppose we find someone who does not agree with us, someone who lives by a different standard. Do we expect him to change his standard to suit ours, or do we change our standard to suit his? Did Christ change His standard to suit the world? Rather He died to maintain the standard which He upheld. He came to radiate the light; that was His privilege, and it is our privilege too. Whether we call ourselves Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, or by any other name, the mark of our religion is not what we may wear or the creed we may profess, but the universal love that was in Christ, that was in the heart of Buddha, that was in the life of St. Francis and is the exalted principle in the life of man today. When that becomes manifest through us, then and then only are we worthy to look up and find our relationship with the Christ spirit.

Every time we hate, every time we show narrowness, bias and unwisdom, we hinder, we block the manifestation of that beneficent, that loving Christ which is within us. "If from any human soul you lift the veil, you will find a Christ there hidden without fail." If we can only lift from our hearts that veil of ignorance and prejudice

and harshness and all qualities which are unChristlike, why then the Christ will shine forth from the hiddenmost part of our being. Let us make it our ardent prayer that we may do this.

We cannot convey very much by preaching sermons, no matter how full of beautiful sentiments and words they may be. Today we need to *live* the sermon, radiate the sermon through our own life, that in our dealings with humanity, as we come in contact with people even in a casual way, they may feel that our religion is not a superficial thing, a dogmatic clinging to some form, but a living faith, a real belief in God. He who has that, his life becomes a constant consecration, an outpouring to that Infinite One—the Father, the Mother, the Guardian of the universe. When we have tuned our heart with that great Principle, it will not matter to us by what name It is called. The Indo-Aryan Scriptures contain a passage that proclaims, *God is One! There are not many Gods, He is One, only One.* He is our Father, He is our Mother, He is our Friend and our Companion; He knows our inmost needs even before we know them.

We are human beings, composed of elements, of desires and attributes, and one of the greatest of these attributes is that which makes us long for spiritual experience. Without it man is incomplete. Let it, however, be a living contact with the Supreme, no matter what name we may give to that Supreme. Then all our small differences will vanish. I feel like saying to you what the Christian in Lessing's great drama *Nathan the Wise*, said to Nathan, the Jew, in gratitude and surprise over his kindly actions: "Why Nathan, you make me feel that you are really a Christian." At that Nathan turned to him and said, "That which makes you feel that I am a Christian, makes me feel that you are a Jew."

There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, Hindu, Buddhist or Mohammedan. It is the same fundamental spirit of God that resides in all above all; and when we realize that, the spirit of Christ, the Christ of the East, will rise in our heart like the sun which sheds its blessings upon the whole of humanity, withholding its light from none.

Let there be peace within our souls, that we may carry that peace into the world, not in a passive, negative way, but like a living flame which will burn the ignorance and prejudice in our minds and in the mind of humanity to ashes. In this way we shall find our great security in the arms of God.

THE NEW YEAR

(A Watch Service given in the Temple of the Universal Spirit, Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California.)

Let us fill this moment full of devout spiritual feelings, so that whatever comes to us we shall have the strength, we shall have the Divine grace to meet it.

Let us be so united in our purpose, so one-pointed in our devotion to the Ideal, that we may feel great strength surging up from within.

May the Supreme Being of the universe bestow upon us His loving and abiding blessing.

May we through His grace hear with our ears that which is holy;

May we behold with our eyes that which is pure and sublime.

May all our endeavors be auspicious.

May our life unfold divine blessings.

May we feel protected, surrendered and sustained.

There is always in the souls of men a great hope that every new beginning may bring something better than

has been before. That is the reason why an occasion like this, even to the casual thinker, always stands for something of untold promise. The end can be determined by the beginning we make, although some people say that is not so. But the philosophers and thinkers have always known it to be true and therefore they never want to begin anything with haste or abruptness, or above all, with thoughtlessness. When we forget our Ideal, no matter what our resolutions may be, or what ethical theories we may hold about right and wrong and doing good to others, we fail utterly because the Ideal is the sustaining influence in everyone's life, great or small.

I think it is very auspicious for us to prepare ourselves for the New Year, to make ready to cross the threshold into tomorrow. The months that lie before us may bring us many beautiful things. We shall hope for them. We must hope for them, and let us hope for big things, not for little things. Things which may even seem impossible, let us hope for those things also, with this faith, that when our own hearts are in tune with great spiritual power nothing is impossible. I am one of those who believe that nothing is impossible unto God, the Supreme. One cannot think or even imagine that the infinite strength would be unable to surmount all obstacles, and when we ourselves become allied to that infinite strength, there is nothing impossible to us.

So let us bind our hearts with that kind of strength. Not with half-hearted feeling, not with half-way faith and disbelief, but whole-heartedly. I think it is a great blessing for us here, thus to be removed from the noises of the world. We need quiet contemplation today to sustain us amid the reverses of life itself. We might say, life should not bring us any tests, yet if life did not bring

severe tests upon us, we would never unfold the hiddenmost powers within the soul.

There is a thought I want to share with you tonight. It comes from one of the great philosophers of the world: *We must learn to detach ourselves from what is capable of being lost, and bind ourselves to what is absolute and eternal, and to enjoy the rest as a loan.* I think many of you have regrets as you look over the past year, or over a period of many years. That is because you have not yet learned to detach yourselves from what is capable of being lost — therefore from losses, failures, disappointments. If we do not acquire this power of detachment, those things become great handicaps.

Tomorrow is a new day. We call it a new year, the beginning of a new chapter, a new dawn with immense possibilities, if we do not mar it by attaching ourselves too strongly to the things that are capable of being lost. It is very simple, yet very practical, and we should make this principle as much as possible our companion, binding ourselves to what is Absolute and Eternal, and enjoying the rest as a loan.

Put personal ambition away from you, and then you will find consolation equally in living or dying, or in whatever may happen to you. *Be what you wish others to become* . . . I love this thought. Do not keep God so far above that you have no contact with Him whatever. Do not keep the Scriptures which you admire on the shelf. Let some of these thoughts become constant with you, not buried. *Essentially man is not a slave either to himself or to the world, but he is a lover.* I think everyone of us can sometimes experience this. When we love we feel free, we feel well, we feel happy. When, however, we are out of tune, we become ill, we are not in accord with ourselves.

Every new step we take is for greater purpose, greater fulfillment. That is the reason I say, let us hope for big things. Once I read a little leaflet given to me by some one, on which it was written that Christ said, "Oh pray, pray, ask for big things, do not ask for little things, and especially when you pray, pray for others." If you can forget yourself that is the biggest thing you can do. And so I say, be very generous; when you pray, pray that you can be so completely lost that you can transcend yourself, you can become bigger than you think you are. There are unbounded resources within us and all about us. Why should we be afraid to give? There is nothing impossible! But right here we come to a very big point: *resolution*. It is through resolution that we conquer all obstacles. One of the world's great men has said, "Resolution is half the battle." Therefore it is vital that we resolve rightly and hold to our resolve.

Do not think that success and victory come as we may imagine, accidentally or without test. We create them out of our inner being. We do not know what we have within ourselves—the spiritual energy, the hidden treasure. You may go on thinking, I am a beggar, I have nothing, or as some people say, I am not learned, I have no education, I have no intelligence, etc! But you have—we all have—something more. We have God's infinite potentiality with us.

At this moment when we are sitting here in this sanctuary away and aloof from all the noises of the outer world, nothing can distract us unless it is our own thought, our restlessness. I am very grateful that we can begin this New Year together, and may we begin it with such fervent feeling that everyone of us may become an avenue for spiritual power. Men do become such avenues.

Great men, and divinely endowed ones like Christ have this power, a power that they manifest and bring into the world of reality. The same power resides within us. Everyone of us may be so quickened that we shall surmount all obstacles, transcend our frailties, our fears, our doubts and despondencies and our self-depreciation. It is the egotistic man who has self-depreciation. If you are a real psychologist, a real thinker, you will know that man does not overcome doubt of self merely by increasing his sense of egotism and self-importance. It is only when we find our inner strength, our inner life, that we rise above all these things and attain to the Divine Power.

Today we feel the world is in great chaos. We have reason to feel that way. Everything reminds us of it. Therefore, in order that we may not be overcome by these fears and doubts, and what we call apparent realities, we must fasten our hearts to something deeper within our own souls.

THE WAY OF TRANQUILLITY

From the "Imitation of Christ"

He hath great tranquillity and peace of heart that neither regardeth praises nor dispraises, and he shall soon be pacified and content that hath a good conscience. Thou art not the better because thou are praised, nor the worse because thou art dispraised, for as thou art, thou art; and whatsoever be said of thee, thou art no better than Almighty God, who is the searcher of man's heart, will witness thee to be. If thou behold well what thou art inwardly, thou shalt not care much what the world speaketh of thee outwardly. Man seeth the face but God beholdeth the heart; man beholdeth the deed but God beholdeth the

intent of the deed. It is a great token of a meek heart, that a man ever shall do well and yet think himself to have done but little.

CHRISTMAS EVE

By Dorothy Hanson

Far to the North
My icicled spruce tree
In mystical splendor
Is blooming tonight.
Ghosts of lost flowers
And of bright August berries
At this joyous season
Awake it to light.

Blue globes of clintonia,
Candles of gentian,
Red rose haws that sparkle
Like June's gayest rose;
Wraith of late goldenrod
Sculptured to star-shape
On the green needle spire
Beckons and glows.

Now they come shyly
The worshippers gentle
From snow-field and forest
From brookside and tree;
Copper-red foxes,
Fawns, sun-befreckled,
Chipmunks and bluebirds
And whitethroats so free.

All kneel at midnight:
The bear and the rabbit,
Veery, and mountain hawk,
Mild as a dove.
All listen rapt
To the song of the Angels,
Meekly adoring
The Master of Love.

WORSHIPPING IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

By Sister Devamata

We do not worship God merely to please Him or to conciliate Him. That is a very primary idea of worship. We worship God in order to bind ourselves to Him, and worship brings us delight only in proportion as we have this sense of union.

Worship is really active meditation. In meditation our thought is supposed to flow in an unbroken stream towards the object of meditation or the Ideal, and all forms of worship have merely been unfolded in order to help the thought flow in that way. When people begin to seek God they are still little children, and so they must sing and play and do various things to consume their impulse to activity and at the same time to hold their thought on God. We know that if we are able to think of God, we unite ourselves with Him, and as we unite ourselves we partake of His nature, and as we partake of His nature we return to our natural state.

We are told in the Bible that God is Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. In the Bhagavad-Gita it is said that people worship Divinity in many aspects and in many material forms and that those who are

sincere in their worship attain their desire through His grace. However, the Lord says of these: "They do not worship Me in Truth, hence they fall back into material bondage."

This worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth does not mean worshipping Him *as* Spirit or *as* Truth. Here is where people deceive themselves. They think of God as a Spirit and they worship Him as a Spirit; but actually what this means is that we must worship Him in the spiritual part of our being, in our Spirit Self, the highest part of our nature. Not until we have realized that do we truly begin to worship God or to unite ourselves with Him. We must constantly seek Him in our own inner Self, and as we realize our inner Self, we worship Him with no effort at all The very realization, the very seeking in itself is worship. As we worship Him in our spiritual nature, we necessarily worship Him in Truth; because our Soul, our innermost Spirit, is forever beholding Truth.

If we could see the refraction of Truth as the physicist can study the refraction of light, we would see what the process is by which our perception is clouded. The Soul sees the Truth face to face because It is the Truth, a very part of Its being. As that Truth shines down through the sense of I-ness, it is refracted; as it comes down through the ordinary processes of intellection it becomes more vague; as it reaches the mind, which is always colored by our senses and our materialistic tendencies, it is so veiled that we scarcely recognize it, and when it comes into the body, the fleshy thing, it becomes so distorted that we are constantly taking untruth for Truth and following that. Yet always the soul is perceiving the eternal Truth in its purity. Therefore as we move

back into our Soul-consciousness all the refractions, all the lenses in the ray of light are straightened. This can be done in no other way.

A man may develop the most powerful intellect and yet not find Truth; he may even exalt his moral nature and become a great philanthropist and still not see Truth. It is only when the whole veil of his outer and manifested being drops that he really beholds It, and that very beholding is worship. It is not because of fear that we worship; we worship by uniting ourselves with our Ideal. The Soul within us is hungry for that union with God. It is that hunger, that effort to reach union with our Source, which has pushed us on through all the stages of our evolution, and just in proportion as we realize that union, even in the smallest degree, do we find happiness and peace.

"But how do we know," you may ask, "when we are beginning to worship God in Truth and in Spirit? Certainly we are not seeking Him in outer things." As a matter of fact we are seeking God all the time. I remember a great teacher said to me in India that there was no such thing as an atheist, as one who did not seek or believe in God, because all men are seeking peace and happiness, and union or peace is the ultimate definition of God. Unfortunately, however, we do seek Him outwardly, but no matter how we may try to unite ourselves with Him in matter we can never succeed; always there is that impenetrable material veil. We imagine that if we gain more of outer things we shall have more of Him, but we have more of the veil as well and thus we are left unsatisfied. Again you may say, "But we are not now seeking happiness in the material." The very fact that you are unhappy regarding external things proves that you are

seeking your happiness there, because if you were not, the conditions of the world would not matter to you as they do. If people treated you well or ill, it would not affect you for you would not be seeking human comfort or sympathy. That is the sign. Just in proportion as we are untouched by outer conditions, do we begin to touch God in our hearts. There is no other measure. The Psalmist who cried out constantly upon the Lord to punish his enemies could never hope to reach God, for the man who is really seeking God has no enemies; he has no desire to have the world other than it is, to have any living being other than he is. He has ceased to calculate or weigh or measure. The very moment that we realize this, the very moment that we give up even one demand on outside conditions, the first act of worship in Truth has taken place in our hearts. The very instant we give up a demand on outside conditions, that is our first act of worship. When something comes and tears from us what is dear to us, some condition rises which seems to deprive us of the thing we covet, whether of inner or outer existence, and life is not running as we would have it run, then if we do not complain, if, instead, we meet it with non-resistance, and offer up in worship the very disappointment or the very pain as a surrender to His Will, by that act we move towards Spirit. But if in our heart of hearts there is the least discontent or disappointment, then we have failed.

To be content with things as they are is fundamental to this worship—the perfect willingness to let life be, to let the world be, to let all our fellow men be—the willingness to move along any path, provided that we move Godward. Nearly always we wish to choose our path to God. We think that if we had better conditions it would be so

much easier to worship Him. We are so disturbed now, so many demands are made upon us, our outer life is so absorbing, that we think that there is no use trying to worship or meditate or seek the Lord. When we realize, however, that this very way that is open to us is the way through which God is forcing us to seek Him, our attitude changes. We accept our path with all its disappointments and interruptions, with all its trials and irritating circumstances, and travel along it with serene heart, seizing upon the little opportunities we have to think of God, utilizing the few moments in between our many outward tasks to remember Him and praying even as we work, even as we walk, even as we sleep. This is to worship in Spirit and in Truth. Life may place us anywhere but in a spiritual environment; we may have anything except a spiritual task, but if we accept all cheerfully, then we have worshipped in Spirit. We do not have to have any special condition of any kind; we have only to take things on the God-side instead of on the human side and we will worship truly.

It is very strange that when we accept these simple ways of worship the opportunities multiply. We begin to feel ourselves everywhere in a vast cathedral. Every moment seems a moment of prayer. It is just as if we heard the roll of the organ, and often in the midst of our work, in the busy office, there will come that sense of being alone with God.

We must fully realize that until we utilize the opportunities we have for serving and seeking God, we shall never have any others; until we have been faithful in the little opportunities, we shall not be given greater ones. The Lord is waiting to see us make the very best of the opportunities we have, before He gives us any others. It

is useless to wait for more; they will never come until we have used to the utmost those we have.

We must worship God from hour to hour with as much of our spiritual consciousness as is at present awakened. We must learn to gather up the thought that is not now controlled, and turn it Godward, before our consciousness will expand and include more of God. The very effort of gathering it up and turning it Godward will expand it. One feeble attempt to worship God in spirit rends the veil, so that tomorrow we shall worship Him more truly. That rends the veil even more, and the next day we find we can worship more truly still.

God has not deprived us of complete union with Him. We have deprived ourselves by seeking union with outer things. He is there ready to reveal the whole of His glory, the whole of His wisdom, the whole of His infinitude, if we will but turn toward Him and begin to seek Him in Spirit and in Truth. This we can do by awakening within us the spiritual nature, which of itself will perceive Truth. In that alone is joy. Until we have reached that sense of spiritual union with God we shall never be happy, we shall never be at peace; but when we have reached it, even in a partial degree, we shall know such peace, such joy, that it will truly pass our present understanding.

Let us no longer waste our time and energy on those things that do but thicken the veil between us and God. Let us now draw away our thought and our clinging to outside things. If there is to be a veil, let it rather be between us and matter, not between God and us. Let us turn our gaze backward into the innermost recesses of our being, and in that silence listen for the Divine Voice. Let us set out this very day to investigate that truer part

of our nature, the God part, and unite ourselves with That, knowing that when we do so, we are uniting ourselves with the whole of Godhead; because God is infinite and indivisible, and when we have touched Him in our heart, we have touched Him everywhere and for all eternity.

O Thou infinite One, help us to feel the glory and joy of the spiritual life;

Help us to know what it is really to come into contact with Thee.

Thou art the Source of all our happiness;

In Thee alone shall we find that which we are seeking;

Through Thee alone shall we attain realization of our own being.

Do not let us tarry here in these outer things, which will never satisfy us.

As a mother calls a child at the evening hour from play,

So do Thou call us back into the quiet retreat of our inner Self, that we may live there, and that all our activity may flow forth from there.

Help us to make Thee the goal of all our effort.

Make our words gentle and loving, like prayers to Thee.

Help us as we move about in our daily tasks to carry with us the consciousness of Thee.

May there be that deep-sounding note of God — the note as it were, of Thy Sacred Name.

May we live close to Thee;

May we love all creatures because we love Thee.

May every act of our life be an act of worship in Spirit and in Truth.

Make us patient in our spiritual effort;

Let us not give up easily because we seem to retain so little.

Give us the strength and the perseverance to go on in the face of discouragement, of all apparent lack of achievement.

Help us to know that even if we call upon Thee in the blackest night, Thou dost hear us and that very call has drawn us closer unto Thee.

Bless all those who may be in pain or in darkness.

Grant us the power to lift them up;

And may our lives be so gentle, so loving, so God-seeking that we shall help them to seek Thee and to make their lives a reflection of Thee.

Bestow upon us Thy great, enduring peace, and Thy eternal blessing.

May Thy Peace, Peace, Peace be not only upon us, but upon every living creature.

ON MUSIC

I AM MUSIC

By Allan C. Inman

(National Bureau for the advance of Music, New York.)

I am music, most ancient of the arts. I am more than ancient, I am eternal. Even before life commenced upon the earth, I was here—in the winds and the waves. When the first trees and flowers and grasses appeared, I was among them. And when Man came, I at once became the most delicate, most subtle, and the most powerful medium for the expression of man's emotions. When men were little better than beasts, I influenced them for their good. In all ages I have inspired men with hope, kindled their love, given a voice to their joys, cheered them on to valorous deeds and soothed them in times of despair.

I have played a great part in the drama of Life, whose

end and purpose is the complete perfection of man's nature. Through my influence human nature has been uplifted, sweetened and refined. With the aid of men, I have become a Fine Art. From Tubalcain to Thomas Edison, a long line of the brightest minds have devoted themselves to the perfection of instruments through which men may utilize my powers and enjoy my charms.

I have myriads of voices and instruments. I am in the hearts of all men and on their tongues, in all lands and among all peoples; the ignorant and unlettered know me, not less than the rich and learned. For I speak to all men in a language that all understand. Even the deaf hear me if they but listen to the voices of their souls.

I am the food of love. I have taught men gentleness and peace, and I have led them onward to heroic deeds. I comfort the lonely and I harmonize the discord of crowds. I am a necessary luxury of all men. I am Music.

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

By J. Hugh Pruett

(Astronomer, Extension Division, Oregon Higher Education System.)

To my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me
rings
The music of the spheres.

Although we moderns have largely succumbed to notions prosaic, yet to some of us there is still a considerable charm in the poetical idea of the ancients that the planets as they encircle the central sun "in order bright" produce exquisite and harmonious music. Sir Thomas Browne wrote, "There is music wherever there is harmony, order or proportion; and thus far we may maintain the music of the spheres."

When we contemplate a clear night sky, artistically

set with its myriads of twinkling stars of many degrees of brilliancy, and note how the entire crystalline sphere seems smoothly to turn westward, do we not sometimes feel that intertwined in all this perfect order there is something closely akin to real music?

Many of the ancient peoples believed that harmonious sounds were actually present in the starry heavens. Some worked out definite relations between the movements of the planets and their music. From this we get the expression "the music of the spheres."

The noted Grecian Pythagoras (6th century B. C.) taught that as the planets swung through the firmament they emitted clear and pure musical notes. Since each note depended upon the planet's speed—and this in turn upon its solar distance—he felt that the spacing of these heavenly bodies was perfectly arranged, for the combinations of the notes produced splendid harmony; indeed, a symphony so majestic as well-nigh to surpass human comprehension. The slower moving, more distant planets were thought to account for the lower notes; those nearer the sun—and moving faster in their orbits—the higher notes.

The Pythagoreans reasoned that the sounds produced by the planets in motion are extremely loud, but they are in perfect harmony. Then why is the music not noticed? Because we become so accustomed to it—having heard it since birth—that we are no more conscious of these vibrations than is a coppersmith of the din he produces. The seven planets (sun and moon included) are the seven strings of the heavenly lyre which give us this beautiful harmony of the spheres. It is a heptachord. The sphere of the fixed stars furnishes an eighth.

This notion was generally held even to the time of

Kepler (around A.D. 1600), who, knowing that any one planet varied somewhat in speed, wrote several notes as the contribution of each. To Saturn he assigned the deep bass, around two octaves below middle C. Swift Mercury's notes were far above the treble staff.

One correspondent wrote me a few years ago: "Perhaps I am a Pythagorean. Why, of course there is music in the universe! Because our puny ears can hear only certain tones doesn't prove that others are not there. That marvelous display of the Aurora Borealis which I watched from the hill in the early morning hours was at times like a great symphony. It was almost too grand and exquisite to bear. I was seeing the tones and harmonies that I could not hear."

Astronomy and music surely are not discordant. Witness the great of the world who have worshiped at the shrines of both: Galileo, Herschel, Saint-Saens, Jeans, Einstein. In his symphonic suite of seven tone poems, "The Planets," Gustav Holst memorialized the harmony of the spheres.

INDIAN MUSIC IS ANCIENT

By Ram Gopal and Serozh Dadachanji

(From "Indian Dancing," Charles T. Bramford Co., 1951.)

Indian music consists of an infinite variety of sounds, skilfully arranged. While in western music the harmony is between melodies, in Indian music it is between rhythms. In comparison with the music of India, that of the West has an uneven flow graduating from a gentle *andantino* to a quick *allegretto* and then perhaps broadening into an *allargando* or rising to a *crescendo*. Indian music, on the other hand, though based on melody, has innumerable variations, so subtle and with so many

twists to each note, that the inexperienced ear misses the lightning changes.

The octave in western music rushes on with the force of a torrent; but there are twenty-two notes in Indian music and they glide smoothly, with silvery tones, creating subtle moods and visions. Owing to the profusion of tones, half, quarter tones, and eighths of tones, and the minute differences in the sound of each of them, each sound ever mingling with another with the most delicate of modulations and cadences, the untrained ear is baffled by what sounds to it like a drawn-out wail!

When Indian musicians play together each tunes to the same melody or improvises a background for it. In the East, orchestral music of the western variety is unknown. Innovators, however, are endeavoring to use counterpoint so that by playing several melodies against contrasting ones, monotony may be relieved.

The Indian musician has two bases on which to improvise—the *tala* and the *raga*.

The *tala* governs the duration of a sound and is beaten out on a variety of drums, each drum regulated to the dancer's pace. It is the dancer who fixes the *tala;* the drummer observes the speed set and meets the dancer at the climax of each beat . . .

The *raga* is a group of notes—rather than a scale in the western sense—but not quite a melody. *Ragas* are meant to create certain moods and are divided into male and female tunes . . .

Suffice it to say that Indian music is, in age, younger only than dancing. Its history goes back to two thousand B.C.

The music of many waters has been my master.

—*Kalevala*

INDIA AT A GLANCE

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

The story of my Indian pilgrimage, told only in part through the letters sent to our Ashramas in America, is yet to be finished. As I moved from place to place, covering long distances mostly by train, and remaining not more than two or three days in each one, writing became difficult. Still, the desire to share my experience with those across the sea was so strong that frequently I found myself with pen in hand in some poorly lighted waiting-room of a railway station, trying to put down the impressions. It was not unusual to be there in the middle of the night in order to make connection with the next train. Then I would open the indispensable part of luggage in our homeland travel, the bedroll (consisting of a coarse fabric cover, sheet and pillow) and spread it on the cane seated couch to welcome a brief period of sleep. The movements on the platform were ceaseless. The barefooted scuffle of the coolies running to meet the approaching train, the crashing sound of the wheels, the voice of the food sellers, all mingling together, played upon the wakefully-sleeping consciousness, reminding me over and over that I was in India.

The traveling conditions even at their best, for someone accustomed to the advantages of the West, offers little or no comfort. It was a challenge to my endurance built on habits acquired by following the American way of life. I must say that the ride in *rickshaw,* (bicycle drawn carriage) *tongas* (primitive horse-cars) or a walk on foot to the sacred shrines, all provided opportunity to live in the Indian way. I learned to appreciate the people who have little or nothing. Again and again the thought flashed through the mind: "Which is better,

material acquisition and comfort with their attendant ills of restlessness, mental insecurity and neurosis, or the simple life of contentment and freedom without earthly possessions?" The sight of industrialization in the city and the primitive standards in the village stood out in extreme contrast seeking an answer to this question.

It was at Gaya where Hindus go to lay offering at the Temple of Vishnu on behalf of their forefathers, that I learned to value the coolies who carry such heavy loads for the passengers. These illiterate, physically strong men can be trusted. More than once they had been my friend and guide when I was alone and althogether in the dark about the place I had come to visit. I had watched them at the station at night lying on the cement, dirt-covered platform stealing a little sleep between the arrival of trains. They were always alert and ready to assist. They took me to the *dak* bungalows, railway retiring rooms or to hotels (which was seldom) and gave me information about the Temples of the locality.

On the early morning of March twenty-sixth I arrived at Gaya after an overnight trip from Calcutta. It had become a habit to move planlessly, like a pilgrim as often as possible; therefore I had made no definite arrangements to stay at a special place. The coolie put the luggage on the horse carriage, asking if he could stay on. We started for the *dak* bungalow where, according to Miss Chatterjee of Indian Tourist Information Service in Calcutta, I could find sleeping quarters. We jolted along the road, the feet of the horse making a cloud of dust; the air was extremely dry and already at this early dawn the temperature had risen to about one hundred degrees. The silent countryside was was crying out for rain. Suddenly fragrance greeted the nostrils from all

directions and I realized this was Springtime in India! Looking out through the tiny carriage windows I saw blooming trees and shrubs everywhere. Accustomed to American atmosphere I could testify that in the tropics the scents are stronger than in the temperate climate. A sense of shame filled me as I could not recall the names of the flowers. This is what the absence from the Motherland had done! Neither the coolie nor the driver sitting on the roof could give any enlightenment.

Dak bungalow had no accommodations as it was filled to overflowing with men working with Ghandiji's great follower Vinoba Bhava. He is the one who is inspiring India's land owners to make free gift of land to the landless. Gaya was his headquarters, from which he walked ten or more miles a day seeking contacts for his cause. Looking around I found men with their bundles and bedding on the verandah. This is what greets the eye everywhere: utter absence of convenience, or facilities of living, for millions of people.

From five until eight in the morning we roamed in search for a place to stay, the coolie and coachman helping to locate one. It was a relief to visit the Vishnu Temple, watch the ritual of oblation for the ancestors, and walk down the steps into the dry river bed of Gomati before the crowds had gathered. Some of the pilgrims were bathing in the shallow strips of water, or filling their *lota* (water jug) to carry it back to the Shrine for worship. Finally we came to Bharat Sevashrama, a refuge provided by a religious group for the pilgrims. Had I been informed of its existence it certainly would have saved fruitless effort and fatigue.

Warning had already been given that I might encounter *loo,* a fierce, scorching wind which carries ser-

ious illness to many when exposed to it. In the forenoon and early afternoon I remained in the bare room of the Ashrama guest-house—a concrete building—trying to keep the windows closed against the strong blasts that forced them open now and then. My little palmleaf fan purchased at the Temple of Rameswaram in South India, became a great comfort. It was the only means of occasional respite from the overpowering heat.

The kind *sadhus* (monks) of this Order whose primary work is to attend to the needs of the pilgrims were more than generous in their services to me. While most of the visiting guests had to fetch their own water and cook their own meals, I was privileged to receive food from their own kitchen, and also a mosquito net for the night. This latter must accompany the traveler unless he is immune to bites of hordes of mosquitos.

The *loo* had subsided in the afternoon when I started in a *rickshaw* to visit Budh-Gaya, only a few miles away, a very sacred place where Gautama Buddha had attained Illumination. There are many remnants of Buddhist culture of archeological significance including the Temple built by Asoka the Great. It enshrines a mammoth statue of the Blessed One. Due to the fanatical tyranny of the invaders, once this Temple had been demolished and later restored to its present structure. The holiest of all spots on the extensive setting is the tree—an Indian Pipal resembling Western poplar in the leaf—cherished both by Hindus and Buddhists. It is believed to be the seedling now grown into a giant, from the original tree under which Buddha had reached Nirvana after long years of search and meditation. After twenty-five hundred years Budh Gaya still holds an atmosphere of sanctity and quiet, drawing millions of pilgrims and travelers to its gates.

THE SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE

By Nancy Wilson Ross

(From the July, 1950, issue of HARPER'S BAZAAR; republished in the MESSAGE OF THE EAST through the kind permission of the editor.)

Not long ago *Life* selected a panel of eminent citizens in the fields of education, business, politics, psychology, religion, publishing and home-making, to meet for a country week-end and discuss, as gravely and constructively as possible, the subject, *The Pursuit of Happiness.* That this long-unexamined phrase of Thomas Jefferson's could have been chosen as a current topic for the trained minds of eighteen assorted specialists and plain citizens to wrestle with for almost three days on end, is, in itself, a startling historical commentary. Such a topic for grave discussion would have been an unthinkable choice a few years back when it was generally taken for granted that Americans were a "happy" people (there are impressive statistical figures to prove we thought so ourselves) and when, moreover, so many of the best minds everywhere were inclined to believe the answer to a better life lay entirely in the social-political-economic field. Anyone who thought otherwise would then have been dismissed as naive, or, at best, unmodern.

Although the members of the discussion group agreed that they were not met together to inquire too deeply into the philosophic question of the *nature* of happiness itself (an inquiry best left to each individual's private probings and requirements) and that they were, rather, concerned with the working of the political or social *right* to happiness, the group's report, nonetheless—and significantly—ended its three-day conference with the words of a young woman who had lost the use of both legs in an automo-

bile accident: "Happiness is primarily an inner state, an inner achievement . . . I would like to close by saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us."

What gave Betsey Barton's ancient words a new and moving dignity was their use by an attractive young woman who had made a heroic fight to rise above a crushing personal blow dealt her by that fate we tend to call "blind." What gave her words fresh psychological meaning was that, in speaking of how personal suffering can shift the focus from the outer to the inner man, she put her finger on what is happening now once again, undeniably, in the world's consciousness: a new questioning of values, a seeking after deeper truths. For it is increasingly plain that even in America, materially better off than any country in the modern world, our democracy is not sick alone by reason of its well-aired economic comforts and sins, but from some deeper and more pervasive malady.

That there is a malady, a kind of national malaise, many psychologists ably indicate to us in public speech and written word. Dr. Erich Fromm, who was present at the Happiness Round Table, went so far as to state that if, as an experiment, an average group of citizens were confined to their rooms alone without any of the standard doodling devices or avenues of escape—radio, movies, television, card-playing, telephones, aimless conversations, detective stories—there would be an almost one hundred per cent incidence of "nervous breakdown" at the end of three days. Not even the world's great books, though allowed in any quantity, would save them, he went on to assert, for modern people have lost the power of quiet, sustained thought and are afraid of nothing so much as to be alone.

Are we to believe then that average people do not know how to communicate in any way with their inner selves? Must they rely entirely on stereotyped pastimes to fill their leisure hours? If so, something must be seriously wrong with this method of time-killing, or how account for the shocking increase of mental patients that clinical statistics clearly show us—thousands suffering from varying degrees of inability to cope with their daily lives? It is obvious that some remedy, either new or old, is needed, just as it is also plain that modern people are searching, as never before, for a "way out," for relief from a growing tension. That they are looking with desperation is revealed, at least partially, by our national liquor bill, which, at nine *billion* annually is three times the national school bill; while at the same time a growing use of barbiturates, in one form or another, has shot Americans to the top of the drug-using peoples of the world. Side by side with these dark and depressing figures one could, however, point to another phenomenal instance of our need for relief and solace: the unprecedented success of such books as *Peace of Mind,* or Thomas Merton's account of the solitary joys of the Trappist monk, or half a dozen other works of similar intent.

It is, of course, the mode now to laugh at people's eagerness to buy uplift literature. Perhaps, however, there is nothing to be scorned in such seeking, no matter how blindly groping and full of wishful thinking the search may be. It is only to be deplored that our national faith in the panacea—the well-advertised, easily purchasable *product* that will bring beauty, success, a carefree old age and a peaceful mind to anyone who heeds and buys—inclines us to the notion that happiness, too, or a serene spirit, may also be had for the wanting, or the wishing, or the purchasing.

For a long time now such old-fashioned words as "sin," "faith," "good," "evil," have been very much in the discard; one might say, in total intellectual disrepute. The temporary departure of these words from common parlance was certainly a healthy, even a necessary step for our time. We needed to rid our minds and spirits of that false burden of guilt which had come to us as an inevitable part of our long Puritan hang-over. Indeed, we owe psychologists a debt of gratitude for pointing out to us the origins of many of the most persistent and destructive guilts that men harbor in their souls.

And yet now a strange thing may be observed happening among—of all people—the modern scientists. Certain physicists responsible for the research that led to nuclear fission, for discoveries that have created the even darker threat of the hydrogen bomb, are using the old words again, addressing us almost in the tones of ancient prophets and teachers in their attempt to arouse man to an awareness of the new age dawning so swiftly and terribly upon us all.

". . . It is easier to denature plutonium than it is to denature the evil spirit of man," remarked Dr. Einstein not long ago. "The physicists have known sin," said Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, our leading expert on atomic energy, in a recent interview. He referred to the moral responsibility which the most advanced of our scientific thinkers have forced us, willy-nilly, to accept or reject, at the price, perhaps, of our own lives, indeed of all life on this planet. Although there are other scientists who adopt a completely empirical, "operational" attitude, free of any ethical weight, it is now generally known that the moral implications of their experiment haunted many of the Los Alamos researchers from the beginning.

Speaking once again, almost as a *religieux*—a new "universalist" one might almost call him—Dr. Oppenheimer, who is also a Sanskrit scholar, quoted lines from the ancient Hindu religious scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, as they flashed into his mind when first the great ball of fire and cloud rolled and foamed upward toward the desert sky of New Mexico and he knew in his heart the world would never be the same again: *If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the Mighty One . . . I am become death, the shatterer of the worlds.*

It is impossible to read such words without a shiver of apprehension, of question, of mystery. But that these words came into Dr. Oppenheimer's mind at such a time, and that they were words out of an ancient scripture of the East, seem to me to lend them a special prophetic weight and significance.

Seemingly, the further man stretches his thinking the deeper grows the mystery, the more profound becomes his sense of awe. Now it is the scientist himself who stands before us, not altogether satisfied with his mathematical explanation of the universe. Even Einstein—the widest-ranging mind science now knows, or perhaps has ever known—has subscribed to an emotion of profound wonder in the face of the enigmatic universe. In touching on these matters, however, he has dared to be uncomplicated, as only the very great dare to be. On the questions of God and religion—questions newly re-admitted to the scientist's empirical world—he once said: "My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. *That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reason-*

ing power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."

Dr. Einstein has also given utterance to a simple warning sentence that lends itself to long pondering: "Man must think in new categories if he is not to perish." Yet when he goes on to develop these "new categories" they turn out to be the very oldest forms of all, the categories of thought and action that Christ and Buddha long ago set forth. "As a man is in his heart so is he," says the Bible. Said Einstein in his famous *New York Times* interview with Michael Amrine, on what he meant by his statement that a "new type of thinking was essential if mankind hoped to survive and move on to higher levels": "We will not change the hearts of other men by mechanism, but by changing *our* hearts and speaking bravely." And again: "When we are clear in mind and heart—only then shall we find courage to surmount the fear which haunts the world."

If from these quoted remarks it seems clear that our major scientists are once again turning part of their inquiry toward the realm of the spirit, the churches of the world now have a new historical challenge and opportunity. With people everywhere seeking in desperation for a restatement of verities, something to give the tottering structure of present life a new and firmer foundation, religion has its chance to return to a central place in man's life. Thoughtful parents who have no close-binding ties of specific church affiliation (and there are many in this country) speak more often and more earnestly than they did even ten years back, of the necessity for instituting some kind of modern religious instruction for their children. Yet many are uncertain as to how best to approach this instruction, how to go beyond the mere formal at-

tendance at some family church. These searching parents complain, more often than not with justification, that they find the average children's Sunday School still geared to the narrow sectarian points of view of the past, or merely offering something very like a regular school class in a vaguely secular atmosphere. "Cutouts of John the Baptist instead of Superman," as one disgruntled father recently phrased it.

Where then shall the parents of the Freudian era, of Hiroshima, Bikini and the Nazi crematories, take for religious instruction and worship their offspring, born in the age of nuclear fission and rockets to the moon? They want, these parents — they admit it now quite openly — some faith by which to give to their lives, and to the lives of their children, a profounder and steadier meaning. Where, then, can they find a faith that will help them to survive tragedy, sickness, loss, uncertainty and want, without at the same time—and this is all-important—inflicting paralysis on the free-roving experimental spirit of man, the thinker; that same inquiring spirit that led Galileo to prison (at the hands of church authorities); that led the Los Alamos scientists to their "moral" arguments about the responsibility their discoveries might cast on human shoulders?

These are questions not easy to answer. They lead directly to what is probably the most pertinent inquiry of them all: Is there not something limiting and even arrogant about the Western, the Christian, refusal to study other religions? Is it going to be any answer, in a world striving to become One, if each church continues to emphasize only its own particular brand of a great, many-sided truth, a truth that has found beautiful and enduring expression not alone in the Bible, but in such books as the

Bhagavad-Gita and many another ancient source of inspiration?

To the most intelligent parents a fresh approach to comparative religions seems to offer at least the beginning of an answer. Here, they feel, may be one of the basic ways for young people to learn respect for the powers of thought that have led men of many races and many times to a wisdom that lies beyond knowledge; wisdom belonging to the realm of Mr. Einstein's "conviction," and Tolstoy's "act of faith." Why then do we not tap more deliberately the available sources of this eternal wisdom? Let us still study the New Testament to be sure, but why not also look, say at some Taoist philosophy like Arthur Waley's translation of *The Way and It's Power*, or *Musings of a Chinese Mystic: Chuang Tzu*, translated by Herbert Giles. Or we could try our vaunted "rational" responses on some Zen "riddles;" testing our resistance on such beginner's books as Christmas Humphreys' *Zen Buddhism* or Allen Watts' *The Spirit of Zen* or Frederic Spiegelberg's *Religion of No Religion;* going on to Suzuki's tomes only if our imaginations were captured. Those who find the subject of Yoga a challenging one might well read *Yoga* by Kovoor T. Behanan, published under the auspices of the Yale Institute of Human Relations, or *Yoga and Western Psychology* by the British psychoanalyst, Geraldine Coster. *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* have a pertinence today, though written hundreds of years before Christ, because they set forth ancient procedures for uncovering the deeper layers of the psyche, after another manner, but with many points similar to the practices of modern analytical therapy. Mary Ellen Chase's *The Bible and the Common Reader* reveals—without any religious bias—

the beauty and enduring truth of those many books-within-a-book which make up our great western spiritual testament. Next to it on the library shelf there surely belongs *The Bible of the World*, a comprehensive collection of the greatest religious documents from the Hindu Scriptures' *Rig-Veda* (with a Creation Hymn astonishingly like the Book of Genesis) to the Koran; L. Adams Beck's *The Story of Oriental Philosophy*, Lin Yutang's compilation of *The Wisdom of China and India*, and certainly Aldous Huxley's admirable *The Perennial Philosophy*, a book which deals with the "highest common factor" (Mr. Huxley's phrase) in all forms of theology dating back as far as twenty-five centuries ago.

If this list leans somewhat toward the East it is only to avoid what Mr. Huxley termed the "reverential insensibility," that "inward deafness to sacred words" with which over-familiarity so often affects people. And is there, after all, anything dangerous in any of these comparisons, or in a heightened awareness of the great contribution of the East to the common fund of man's spiritual knowledge? Can we not deliberately set the great truth and beauty of the Christian form of faith more firmly in its historic setting in the admirable way, for instance, that is suggested in the book *The Drama of Our Religion?* Here the author, A. Graham Baldwin, is at pains to establish time relationships in the world as a whole. He shows, for instance, that when the ancestors of Moses, Elijah, Isaiah and Jesus were leading their children from the desert of Arabia into the "land between the rivers"—that land destined to become the nexus of the cultures of Persia, Babylonia and Assyria—the first Egyptian Pharaoh had already been dead three thousand years, and both China and India had experienced their

great early civilizations; approximately in the same world period that produced the inspired Hebrew prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, India produced the enlightened prince who, as the sacred Buddha, was destined to give the world one of its greatest religions, while in China, an ancient spiritual inheritance was being revived and reinterpreted by the wise Confucius; the Golden Age of Greece that began with Pericles developed into the era of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who made their undying contribution to collective thought in the same world period which found a small handful of exiles returning from Babylon and Judea to restore the lost Jerusalem—and so on.

Is this not saying what Dr. Vannevar Bush has said in the foreword to his book, *Arms and the Free Man?* "The scene changes but the aspirations of men of good will persist."

In the recurrent spiral rhythm of man's historic search for final meanings, such facts as those in Mr. Baldwin's book can only suggest basically one truth: that man, the human animal, east, west, north, south, black, yellow, red or white, is a creature with boundless powers for self-discovery and spiritual growth, and that somehow these eternal human powers need to be rediscovered and re-emphasized as a common heritage if we are to counteract the daily newspapers' overpowering array of facts from the *other* side of the spiritual ledger, the inhumanity of man to man. Surely people everywhere wish and need to believe in their own powers for greater goodness, self-sacrifice and mercy. How else explain the way in which the death of Gandhi so forcibly captured the imagination of the American people? The very fact that an account of the last days of this Indian saint—wherein his death was

given all possible symbolic and religious overtones, presenting him as a martyr and savior—was published in the magazine *Holiday*, a magazine dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure through travel, is in itself a most significant straw in the new-old wind that seems to be rising.

New notions — very old notions for that matter — of what constitutes true human greatness are beginning again to be publicly supported. A large number of eager people, to cite one instance, have read every available word on Albert Schweitzer, whom the press unselfconsciously dubbed "the greatest man on earth," a man who, with Christ admittedly as his example, gave up his three notable careers in music, philosophy and medicine, to go to Africa and humbly serve the most backward and needy natives he could find. Schweitzer's worn but serene face, the humorous, ineffable sweetness of Gandhi's expression, the old, wise eyes of Einstein, and the younger, searching face of Oppenheimer gaze out at us from our magazines, offering new and priceless comparisons to the more "worldly" countenances with which we have become familiar.

Books like Sheldon Cheney's *Men Who Have Walked with God* and Rom Landau's *God Is My Adventure* provide examples of the widely different types of men who in our own time, as well as in the past, have made the search for the spiritual life their main objective.

There is, it would seem, a fresh wind rising and in its quickening eddies may be discerned a host of those forever new, eternally old, straws by which men have always tested the direction and velocity of historic currents. Once again the human creature in increasing numbers turns his gaze inward to ask, "Who am I and where am I going? Where are the fixed points, the abiding poles, in a world of change and chaos?"

VEDANTA AND CHRISTIANITY

By Swami Vivekananda

(Notes of a lecture delivered at the Unitarian Church, Feb. 28, 1900.)

Between all great religions of the world there are many points of similarity; and so startling is this likeness, at times, as to suggest the idea that in many particulars the different religions have copied from each other.

This act of imitation has been laid at the door of different religions, but that it is a superficial charge is evident from the following facts:

Religion is fundamental in the very soul of humanity, and as all life is the evolution of that which is within, it of necessity expresses itself through various peoples and nations.

The language of the soul is one, the languages of nations are many; their customs and methods of life are widely different. Religion is of the soul and finds expression through various nations, languages and customs. Hence it follows that the difference between the religions of the world is one of expression and not of substance; and their points of similarity and unity are of the soul, are intrinsic, as the language of the soul is one, in whatever peoples and under whatever circumstances it manifests itself. The same sweet harmony is vibrant there also, as it is on many and diverse instruments.

The first thing in common in all great religions of the world is the possession of an authentic book. When religious systems have failed to have such a book, they have become extinct. Such was the fate of the religions of Egypt. The authentic book is the hearthstone, so to speak, of each great religious system, around which its adherents gather, and from which radiate the energy and life of the system.

Each religion, again, lays the claim that its particular book is the only authentic word of God; and that all other sacred books are false and are impositions upon poor human credulity; and that to follow another religion is to be ignorant and spiritually blind.

Such bigotry is characteristic of the orthodox element of all religions. For instance, the orthodox followers of the Vedas claim that the Vedas are the only authentic word of God in the world; that God has spoken to the world only through the Vedas; not only that, but that the world itself exists by virtue of the Vedas. Before the world was, the Vedas were. Everything in the world exists because it is in the Vedas. A cow exists because the name cow is in the Vedas; that is, because the animal we know as a cow is mentioned in the Vedas. The language of the Vedas is the original language of God, all other languages are mere dialects and not of God. Every word and syllable in the Vedas must be pronounced correctly, each sound must be given its true vibration, and every departure from this rigid exactness is a terrible sin and unpardonable.

Thus, this kind of bigotry is predominant in the orthodox element of all religions. This fighting over the letter is indulged in only by the ignorant, the spiritually blind. All who have actually attained any real religious nature never wrangle over the form in which the different religions are expressed. They know that the life of all religions is the same, and consequently they have no quarrel with anybody because he does not speak the same tongue.

The Vedas are, in fact, the oldest sacred books in the world. Nobody knows anything about the time when they were written or by whom. They are contained in many volumes and I doubt that any one man ever read them all.

The religion of the Vedas is the religion of the Hindus, and the foundation of all Oriental religions; that is, all other Oriental religions are offshoots of the Vedas; all Eastern systems of religions have the Vedas as authority.

It is an irrational claim to believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ and at the same time to hold that the greater part of His teachings have no application at the present time. If you say that the reason that the powers do not follow them that believe, (as Christ said they would,) is because you have not faith enough, and are not pure enough,—that will be all right. But to say that they have no application at the present time is to be ridiculous.

I have never seen the man who was not, at least, my equal. I have travelled all over the world; I have been among the very worst kind of people—among cannibals—and I have never seen that man who is not at least my equal. I have done as they do,—when I was a fool. Then I did not know any better, now I do. Now they do not know any better; after a while they will. Everyone acts according to his own nature. We are all in process of growth. From this standpoint one man is not better than another.

"We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor. XIII 8). Since the essential nature of the spiritual is truth, every new truth means ultimately something won. Truth is under all circumstances more valuable than untruth, and this must apply to truth in the realm of history as to other kinds of truth. Even if it comes in a guise which piety finds strange and at first makes difficulties for her, the final result can never mean injury. It can only mean greater depth. Religion has, therefore, no reason for trying to avoid coming to terms with historical truth. —*Albert Schweitzer*

SIVA'S CHILDREN DANCE

By Ethelwing Webster

The study of man and the ancient arts and rituals of the centuries is a most fascinating and profound one. Perchance the least understood by the Western mind are the *Siva* dances based on the fundamental symbols of God and Nature. They should be studied in the light of the Hindu faith and religion and the beautiful legends of the race.

The exotic movements of the dancer portray the rhythm of the Cosmic Universe woven into a perfect pattern of harmony as the story of Creation is told by the symbolic gestures and postures of the human body, clothed in exciting beauty of Oriental colors.

The Hindu worships God in every atom of living substance, and feels himself to be one with, and a divine ray from, the Absolute; so the spiritual interpretations of the *Siva* dances are majestic and profound.

In the Hindu religion *Siva* is a symbol of Diety and looked upon as the spiritual essence of Nature, the Creator, the Transformer, the Rejuvenator and the culmination of Spiritual Wisdom. These qualities are not seen in the dances of the Occident, religious or otherwise, although the American Red Indian, in spite of the white man's culture walling him in, still worships the Great Spirit of his ancestors. In the chant, the dance, and the tom-tom of the ceremonial drums he expresses his inner emotions and worships the phenomenal world he lives in, seeing the Creator in all living beings. The Hopi tribal snake dance, held in some desert sanctuary at sundown, is a ritual as sacred and heartfelt as a Hindu Temple Dance.

There is a theory that the American Red Indian may

have descended from the Hindu Indian far back in the mist of antiquity when Bering Strait connected the continents. Although the stylizing of their dancing is definitely different, the inner and spiritual meaning is the same.

The basis and origin of dancing is as old as man and seems to be the most popular of all the arts. Ancient Temple dancers used the pantomime of the dance to stimulate spiritual ideals; again, the demoniacal nature of man was aroused by the Devil Dancers to incite horrible orgies and bloody sacrifices.

The modern fashion of dancing seems to be in the nature of a hangover from the wild savage moods of the jungle people made a little mad by the moon. Let us hope this cycle will soon run its course and dancing become to the Western mind a spiritual force and power, a universal language of movement in the rhythm of the Cosmic Universe.

SONG FOR THE QUIET ONES

By Doris Peel

There is a way of listening
  So you can hear
Many a thing unheard, they say,
  By ear;
But quiet you must be to the very bone,
And alone, you must always be alone,
  Then they are known:

The faint cry of the trodden flower;
  The change of a heart;
An hour in flow,
  And the secret start of surprise;

The first surmise
  Of a new child;
The mild
  Hum of the spider spinning,
And the ringing accents
  Of sun on snow;
The hubbub of ants
  Lugging a crumb;
The thud and drum
  Of all wings;
The slow pulsing of the buried seed;
  The din of the impulse
Before the deed—
  These are the things you may know
Here at this hour,
  If without fear;
If you can bear
  To be aware
Of the cry of a flower,
  The whirl of a year.

There is a way of listening
  So you can hear
Many a thing unheard, they say,
By ear;
  But quiet you must be
To the very bone,
And alone, you must always be alone;
  Then they are known.

In the Silence, past all sound, in Eternal Peace thy nature dwells. —*F. J. Alexander*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(Continued from the Fall Issue)

Recently, over the radio, the disciple heard a scientist speak on the mystery of the radio itself. He said that every sound that has ever been uttered goes on for all time; that if we possessed instruments sufficiently sensitive we could capture the voice of Pericles speaking to the Athenians, the golden voice of Lord Buddha proclaiming his immortal *Dharma*, yes, even the voice of Jesus as he gave forth the "Sermon on the Mount."

We cannot grasp all that this implies, but if we accept it as a fact, it must give us pause in moments of irritation or anger lest we set in motion cruel words that will have no end. Perhaps in the mighty cosmos the ugly, hateful, heavy sounds may, like sediment, sink to the lower spheres of consciousness, while the sounds expressive of love and truth and beauty may rise into a more sublimated atmosphere.

Be that as it may, the disciple wishes that she could raise some ethereal antennae on high and capture the voice of Swami Paramananda, as for instance, on Thursday, August 5th, 1926, when he conducted the morning session of the Summer School. Some of his *words* are preserved, but oh, for the *voice* to animate them!

"May this morning breeze," he said, "soothe us, refresh us, give us a sense of harmony and abiding peace. You know how it is when light flickers," he continued. "When we try to read by it, it does not suffice us. Same way when our mind, our heart, in fact all our inner faculties flicker, they do not give us true vision. That is why it is needful to bring them to a focusing point. Love helps to focus them.

"Many times we may receive the touch of the holy hand upon us, but we are not able to feel it. We are surrounded by so many layers of thought and consciousness. It is just as if we were in a shell. How eagerly Lord Jesus cried out for those who could see and hear and feel! But too often they created a shell by their brooding thoughts and He was not able to reach them. His blessing which fell like a shower of blossoms, full of fragrance, was imperceptible to the world-soaked mind. When the mind is hard and harsh and crude, it is incapable of feeling anything so subtle, so full of spiritual significance. Suppose we lose our outer vision? That comes sometimes. Occasionally fog prevents us from seeing the rays of the sun. Same way mental and emotional fog rolls in between us and our Ideal. What then can we do? We can close our eyes and fix our gaze on the light within.

"Instinct of world-consciousness seems to be to seek out the very thing that has already brought trouble. For instance, if we have suffered through one person, we turn to another person for comfort. Instead we should turn within and look toward That which alone can sustain us. Instead of condemning our difficulties, we should learn something from them.

"When we have moments of turbulence and anger we should try to balance them by withdrawing our mind from outer things through this inward turning. Living in the world without being affected by it is the greater ideal, but before we can do this we must gather up strength and cease to bar the stream of love and wisdom flowing into the heart. One single thought, a single wrong attitude can act as a barrier. Sri Ramakrishna once asked Swami Vivekananda what he would do if he were a fly which had lighted on the edge of a bowl of nectar?

Swamiji replied, 'I should try to be very careful not to fall in.' At which Sri Ramakrishna exclaimed: 'If one plunges into the ocean of Divine bliss, there is no drowning or death. Suppose you lose your little self-consciousness in that ocean of everlasting life. Something greater will take its place—something forever abiding.' Buddha declared this and Christ said the same thing. Our ideal must have definite application. These ideas of unselfishness, for instance, if we try to practice them vaguely we shall never grasp their significance.

"Spiritual life is the greatest thing that man can conceive, that is, if it is genuine. Otherwise it can make us fanatical, self-centered and selfish. When, however, we really put these ideals into practice, nothing can overthrow us. Why am I sharing with you these thoughts? So that we may feel more and give more!" (At this point the Swami asked everyone to chant with him the sacred words: *Hari Om.*)

"May the sound of the Holy Word purify body, mind and heart. May it purify the whole atmosphere, driving away all that is alien and harmful!"

NOON

"What is the purpose of meditation? What does it signify? What does it imply? This noon meditation is to make a break in the day's routine. It is to give us a sense of physical relaxation, of inner peace and of spiritual contact, as much as is possible. The idea is to come together and create an atmosphere of silence and tranquillity. To do this we should not wait till the last minute. Sometimes one moment of meditation may bring great exaltation if one is prepared for it. To derive the full measure of good from it we must cooperate in every way. We should have a place all in readiness. We should have

a feeling of quiet and of rest—no noise of typewriter, of singing or chattering. We never shall receive benefit unless we make an effort. Several people working in unison create a tremendously strong atmosphere, and that is what we want to create."

AFTERNOON

"*The practical province of life is to make our connection with our Source, and one of the best ways to make this connection is by the establishment of tranquillity. One who lacks tranquillity has a hard road to travel. Tranquillity is the real test of character. We need tranquillity in all the varying conditions of life. Unless we can maintain calmness of mind, we lose all our blessing.*

"We must try to find a practical way of working out this principle contained in our morning's lesson from *Daily Thoughts and Prayers*. Sri Krishna in the *Gita* suggests the way, but to be successful it requires on our part an understanding spirit.

"*Regarding alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, fight thou the battle, thus sin will not stain thee.* Try to grasp the significance of these words and what must be the state of a mind that is not influenced by any of these differing sensations—a mind that is not susceptible to the changing conditions of the outer world. If we are affected by pleasure, we are bound to be affected by pain. So let us learn to regard these two alike. Sri Ramakrishna used to take earth in one hand and gold in the other and pass them back and forth till he felt there was no difference between them. The gold represented wealth, the dirt poverty, and he balanced them equally on the same scale. Why should we not want pleasure and seek to avoid pain? Because we cannot take one without the other. Therefore the wise put them on an equal basis.

They make a practice of it. If we pick up a coin one side of which is pleasing to us and the other not so pleasing, we cannot retain the pleasing side and throw away the unpleasing.

"This is a great philosophic question, but it is not through cut and dried intellectual discussion that we shall gain understanding of it. We must put equalmindedness into practice. It is good for us as we go through the round of experience, meeting the onslaughts of life, to exchange what we hold in our hands as did Sri Ramakrishna, passing back and forth pain and pleasure, smile and frown, blue sky and cloud, till they are all equal to us. When we are able to do this, we shall know how to apply our knowledge to every condition. It is a very great lesson to learn.

"When our wisdom enables us to rise to a point of such consecration, then it is no more a question of struggle. So long as we think that tranquillity is an office or state we acquire through struggle, then it is not tranquillity. We gain tranquillity through meditation. Meditation is like taking a spiritual bath. It transforms a person's life. One moment of such experience may change an individual's whole bearing. A high strung nervous person begins to feel tranquil and calm and to know serene happiness. 'Happiness is in the Infinite and the unbounded—never in the finite!' When one has been blessed by coming into direct contact with that Infinite, he is blessed indeed. There are many kinds of blessings. If the blind receives his eyesight they say that he is blessed, or if he is cured of his lameness; but these are only temporary blessings. If he were cured of his spiritual blindness or were made inwardly whole, that would be the real blessing. These things do not come accidentally. There is no such thing as accidental inspiration. Thought, yearning,

service—all such efforts earn inspiration. We have to work for it. Of course, at first we have great struggle, but when illumination comes it is born not out of the struggle but out of the peace which follows it.

"Thus I have declared unto thee the wisdom of Self-realization. Listen now, O son of Pritha, regarding Yoga, by knowing which thou shalt be free from the bonds of Karma. In this Yoga there is neither waste of effort nor possibility of evil results. Even a little practice of this Yoga delivers one from great fear.

"The work that we perform with attachment is always productive of some sort of bondage. In these verses Sri Krishna shows how one may go through life and be free of this bondage. Work, wisdom, devotion, philosophy, rationalism (interwoven with heart), action—all these are inter-related. When our work is actuated by wisdom and sustained by devotion (that is, when we are led by the guiding hand of wisdom and are moved by a love that comes from deep within) then there is spiritual unfoldment. When wise men attain *Brahman* they have only one desire left—to do for others. Work we have to do in this life. The work that is done with desire for results binds the soul; the same work done with idealism and selfless spirit brings refreshment and liberation. Miracles are taking place all the time. But there is only one miracle we can legitimately hope to perform; that is the miracle of love—sustaining, upraising. Whatever we may aspire to attain through the miracle of love will be attained.

"Watchfulness, sincerity of purpose, surrender—these we must practice. Surrender—Thy will be done at every hour—this is the greatest of prayers, the most sacred of sentiments. There is no wisdom that can excell this attitude. After all our struggles we are glad to accept it. 'I',

the discordant note, breaks the rhythm of the world. Every time, however, that we say 'Thy will be done' from our mind and heart and mouth, all together saying it, it helps to restore that rhythm and is very effective in healing and upbuilding.

"But what courage it takes to say it. Christ was able to say it even when His enemies were upon Him. It is a supreme faith in Truth that enables one to say it and live it. To abide by it is the greatest possible solace. When we lay ourselves down and all the little structure we have built seems to be a ruin, what is built upon that ruin is a most abiding structure. Ego and the Master of ego cannot sit together in the same place. The house must be cleansed. All other things must be removed. Everything that is fresh and fragrant must be brought there and offered to the Lord of the House. Sanctify and clean and then invite Him to enter. He is always ready to come. When He comes, place Him on the throne and worship Him.

"That is the way of religion. He gives us absolute freedom. But when we love Him we do not want such freedom. Voluntarily we give heart and soul and lay down our freedom, saying, 'Thy will be done.' Here is where the mystics are the wisest people. They sacrifice their little freedom to gain eternal freedom."

Friday, August 6th, 7:30 A.M.

(Swami reads from *Daily Thoughts and Prayers*)

"Keep your mind and heart tranquil and your life peaceful.

"In order to do this we must have a definite factor to hold to. The *Upanishads* tell us that whatsoever exists is full of *Brahman*—the Absolute One. There is nothing else. When that consciousness dawns in the heart all fluctuation ceases.

" Driven by the storm of life, I have
come to Thee,
Thou eternal tree of shelter!
As I sit under thy protecting boughs
My storm-pressed heart sighs
with relief.
Thou hast given me my long-lost
peace.

"We have in India rather a beautiful saying, that one should always serve a great tree which is productive of fruit. Even when it does not produce fruit, no one can take away the shelter that it gives. There are days in our life when we feel lost in the haze of the world. This is true not only of ordinary people; it is told of the great saints as well. Probably it is one of the disciplines of spiritual life. To be able to remain steadfast, that is, not to give up life's ideal, is a very great achievement.

"Sometimes we do things hastily. We lose our opportunities. Tranquillity, steadfastness, let us hold to these, let us hold to these! Sri Ramakrishna used to tell a story about a man who set to work to dig a well. When he had gone down only a few feet a neighbor came to him and said, 'You have picked a bad spot, you'll never find water there. Go a little farther south.' So the man did as he was told and started digging in the new place. He had hardly got started, however, when a passerby called out to him, 'You're just wasting your strength. Where you are there is nothing but dry sand. Go farther over to the right and you are sure to strike water.' So again he picked up his tools and moved on and started anew. And thus it went on with the result that he never dug deep enough at any place to find water. Same way it is with those who seek spiritual illumination. If they are fickle and changeable, following this one's advice and that one's advice, they will never reach their goal.

"*The practical province of life is to make our connection with our Source, and one of the best ways to make this connection is by the establishment of tranquillity. One who lacks tranquillity has a hard road to travel. Tranquillity is the real test of character. We need tranquillity in all the varying conditions of life. Unless we can maintain calmness of mind, we lose all our blessings.* That is a most terrible calamity—when we cannot receive the divine blessing because our hands are already filled with things which we think are important. In this way we deceive ourselves. Renunciation, which is the cleansing process of life—renunciation of self—makes it possible for us to receive the grace of God.

"*May the all-abiding Presence keep me quiet and peaceful.*

May it infill my life, my thought and action.

May I manifest that Presence through love and harmony.

May the Divine blessing rest upon me and upon all living creatures.

"Love is the natural instinct of the human heart, and harmony is the most natural state of mind and body. With these two principles as our background we flourish and our life blossoms forth. It brings strength, courage and renewal.

"We must plant the spiritual seed just as we plant a seed in the ground, and then cherish it, water it and watch it. Life of devotion is just like that, like the little seed that we plant, and our duty does not end with the planting. We must water it, tend it and keep the weeds away from it—the weeds of wrong thoughts and alien influences. Then some day we shall find that it has become a plant which will bear abundant fruit and will infill our life with fragrance.

BOOK REVIEW

Le Roi d'Angkor

By Makhali Phal

The meeting of East and West on the plane of the spirit is well along; India with her Vedanta, China with her Taoism, Japan with her Zen—these are by now well known to the Occident. Here is a novel to tell us about Cambodia and her great Buddhist civilization which flourished around Angkor in the eleventh century of the Buddhist era. Little has heretofore been known of this chapter in Oriental spirituality, but the authoress, the daughter of a Cambodian mother and a French father, is admirably qualified to fill the gap. Her knowledge of both cultures is profound and intimate: her place in French literature would seem to be in the tradition of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Loti, masters of the *Roman exotique;* as for the eastern spirituality, our authoress knows how to comment sagely on the shades of meaning of *nirvana* and *bhakti.* Herein she corrects some of the misunderstandings common in our hemisphere.

You can wander with monks through the jungle, following the tracks of elephants or rhinoceri. Or you can hear OM sounded on conch shells, charming the holy stillness of some sequestered temple. Or you can behold giant whales disporting themselves off remote islets of the Pacific Ocean.

Here, then is the "inside feeling" of a fascinating period of the ancient Orient. May we expect an English translation? If is could carry over the poetic excellence of the French original it would be well worth the while.

—*D. G.*

REPORT

Vedanta Centre— Ananda Ashrama

Cohasset, Massachuetts

The work at the Vedanta Centre continued in an even rhythm reaching its climax with the observance of *Durga Puja* or the worship of the Divine Mother, who, it is believed, comes to deliver Her children from all distress. On October the fifteenth when the magical autumn had transformed the Ashrama into a brilliance of gold, yellow and red, the four day festival began, its center being the indoor Shrine on which the whole attention of the resident community was focused in acts of constant prayer and worship. The festival culminated on Sunday, bringing together many friends and devotees, who were fed in spirit and body respectively through the Services and a Hindu dinner into which Gayatri Devi put her entire devotion. New England's Indian Summer, then at its height, made the morning worship possible in Nature's Sanctuary as well as fellowship during the banquet under the spreading pine trees. So glowing was the beauty of the whole setting and the feeling of happiness in human hearts that it seemed as if Mother Herself, entering into every part of the place, were shedding Her benediction on all.

An autumn bazaar and tea arranged on Saturday, October the 31st, proved to be a real attraction. Many came, singly and in groups, from Boston, Cohasset and neighboring towns, some visiting the Vedanta Centre for the first time. It was a happy affair, alive with human interest and fellowship.

Vedanta Centre Library and Reading Room, Boston

A week later the Vedanta Library was formally opened at the newly finished room of the Universalist Meeting House at 70 Charles Street. Here, the weekly class in the *Upanishads* had been held throughout the summer and autumn. After the regular lecture, Gayatri Devi introduced Esther Orlander, chosen to be chief librarian; a loyal follower of Vedanta for many years and a teacher by profession, she had come east from California to dedicate her life and services. Mrs. Orlander spoke briefly, winning her audience through her innate humility and love of Truth.

The Library and Reading Room remains open five days during the week welcoming all students of Oriental religions and philosophy. One of the windows facing Charles Street displays the Vedanta literature—an invitation to learning more of what India has to offer in the field of metaphysical knowledge.

On November first the new schedule of a Sunday afternoon Service in the city was begun. Gayatri Devi conducted the first Service before an eager group; the second was held by Esther Orlander, while Sister Daya was traveling toward Boston on a Santa Fe train. Sister Daya was given a warm welcome on Sunday the fifteenth, when she took charge of the Vedanta Centre during Gayatri Devi's visit to La Crescenta, California.

"Illumination Festival" was held in the same quarters on Thursday, November the 5th. The response of the people to this feast of lights, a great favorite, was most enthusiastic. Many candles burned under the three figured bas-relief of Krishna, Buddha and Christ hung on the central wall of the room. Einar Hansen of Boston Sym-

phony Orchestra played on his violin and Gayatri Devi interpreted the worship of *Kali,* Mother the Terrible, on the darkest night of the autumn moon, and its deep spiritual significance.

A public Service was held in Boston on Thanksgiving Day, Sister Daya conducting.

Outside Lectures

At the invitation of Rev. Gaston M. Carrier, the pastor of First Grace Universalist Church of Lowell, Massachusetts, Gayatri Devi spoke there on Monday, October the twenty-sixth, participating in a program entitled "Why I believe."

On November 2nd Gayatri Devi was again the guest lecturer, addressing a class on comparative religions for the undergraduate students of Boston University. Professor Carl Purinton had already started the course on Hinduism requesting Gayatri Devi to take this period stressing the philosophy of the *Upanishads,* and especially of the *Bhagavad Gita,* which was being used as a text.

The flight from Boston to Los Angeles was a matter of thirteen hours, except that an unexpected storm interfered, compelling Gayatri Devi to remain overnight in New York on November 6th during her westward journey. So eager were the devoted Vedanta students in the large city that no fury of nature could prevent their coming together in the home of one of them. There the candles were lighted and incense burnt, and Hindu chants and sogns filled the atmosphere. The delay became a blessing in disguise as it provided an opportunity answer- the spiritual need.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

Labor Day, September seventh, was observed at the California Ashrama in the customary manner, by silence and meditation. It was a serene summer day, and the afternoon of silence brought great peace and refreshment to all who joined in the hours of prayer and contemplation.

In the Fall of the year Vedanta Centres all over the world celebrate the great *Durga Puja,* the Festival of the Divine Mother. At this time God as the Infinite Mother of all creation comes into the midst of Her faithful children as a vibrant, living Presence and She is worshipped by them with special offerings, prayers and supplications. To Ashrama members this is the truly high festival of the year. The celebration began this year on the fifteenth of October. The Temple was sweet with the fragrance of fruit, flowers, perfume, sandalwood and incense. And the Shrine was resplendent with an offering of red carnations, chrysanthemums and roses—red being Divine Mother's color. *Vijaya,* the final day of the worship and a day of love and forgiveness, came on Saturday the seventeenth. On this day the Mother gives Her Divine Peace unto Her children before She makes Her departure. The climax of the Season came on Sunday when Sister Daya, inspired by the holy festival, spoke with wideness and tenderness on the subjects: "The Bestower of Peace" and "Our Eternal Refuge." A large group enjoyed a happy luncheon party at the Community House. It was a day of harmony and true spiritual power felt by all who came to the La Crescenta retreat for these special services.

On Thursday, the twenty-second of October the community observed the *Laksmi Puja,* and the evening's les-

son, given through fairy tale and legend, was concerned with the innate thirst of the soul for that ultimate Beauty, (represented by the Mother *Laksmi*) which is Truth.

Thursday night, November 5th, marked the climax of the Fall celebrations with perhaps the most beautiful of the Indian festivals, *Deepali*—the Festival of Light. The Temple of the Universal Spirit was aglow with many candles and vigils; and flame colored flowers among the altar lights in the Shrine carried out the idea of the overcoming of darkness by the inner Light of lights. Light with its deeper meanings in man's life was the theme of Sister Daya's talk. The Temple was full of eager listeners, and everyone went away from this most beloved of holy feasts with a feeling of renewal and of rededication to the light of his own spirit. The Lady Ram Rau—wife of the first Indian ambassador to the U. S. and the moving spirit behind much of the welfare work being done in India today—was present. Her few words of appreciation for Ananda Ashrama and its work gave all a sense of the Oneness of Spirit and the brotherhood of man.

One Wednesday afternoon, the eighteenth of November, a small but friendly and generous group gathered for the opening of the annual Christmas bazaar. Purchases were made, greetings exchanged and tea was served, making it altogether a happy and successful occasion. It was a welcome opportunity for many to visit with Gayatri Devi who flew to California—braving an Eastern storm—on the seventh of November. Two days after her arrival, after a very brief visit with her, Sister Daya left for Boston and Cohasset. By the time this issue of the *Message* is published, each will have returned to her respective post leaving all refreshed with the sense of the

closeness of these two centres in spite of the many miles that separate them.

Thanksgiving was observed in the usual manner, Gayatri Devi conducting a morning Service.

On Saturday, December 5th, Gayatri Devi spoke informally to a group of young girls at the home of their Sunday School teacher, Dycia Samuels. Mrs. Samuels and her students had been so moved by the account (in the Summer '*Message*') of Charushila Devi's school for Indian girls that each of them found some work in order to raise a fund as an offering to the school.

A Note of Thanks

Occasionally we receive expressions of appreciation for the *Message of the East*. The following is a letter from the Reverend M. McBride Panton, Pastor of the Church of Spiritual Philosophy in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"What a lovely surprise to receive so many copies of *Message of the East!* I have found them most valuable as well as delightful, and ever since they came, whenever there was a spare minute, I have been enjoying them.

"I have always valued and admired Swami Paramananda. His articles tell eternal truths in such simple and direct language that he is perpetually a source of inspiration. Also, I have found many of the other articles of help. "Thank you again for your generous gift. It is deeply valued."

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